

REMARKS

The office action of June 22, 2010, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1, 6, 8, 11-17 and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over EP 0999324 to Marcarini in view of the patent to Van den Boom et al.

Claims 7, 9 and 18-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Marcarini and Van den Boom et al., and further in view of the patent to Sanders.

Claims 2-4 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Marcarini and Van den Boom et al., and further in view of the patent to Nahata.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Marcarini and Van den Boom et al., and further in view of the patent to Nahata and the patent to Magnussen et al.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicant has canceled claims 1-23 and added new claims 24-41.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions disclosed in the references.

To assist in the discussion of the claims, applicant repeats claim 24 below with the respective features of the invention indicated with the numbers 1-16.

1) External door handle, especially for motor vehicles, comprising:

2) a stationary bracket (10) attached to the door (11);

3) a grip (20), supported pivotably on the bracket (10);

4) a lock mounted in the door (11), which lock can be switched between a locked and an unlocked position;

5) wherein an actuation (24) of the grip (20) to open the door (11) is nonfunctional in the locked position but functional in the unlocked position; and

6) at least one capacitive electronic sensor circuit (28, 38), which is mounted on the bracket (10) and on an outer electrode that is active in the outside area of the external door handle;

7) wherein an active surface (37) of the outer electrode senses the approach of or contact by an authorized person and is therefore called the sensor surface (37); and

8) wherein the authorized person carries with him an active or passive means of identification for access authorization and/or driving authorization for the vehicle;

9) wherein in an inner area of the external door handle at least first and second further inner electrodes are connected to the capacitive electronic sensor circuit (28, 38);

10) wherein the sensor surfaces (37, 67; 47, 57) operable in the outside area are arranged on the pivotable grip (20) and/or on a cover part (25) of the external door handle;

11) wherein active surfaces designated as transfer surfaces (36, 56; 46) of the second inner electrode are provided on the grip (20) and/or the cover part (25), and are electrically connected (34, 60; 49) to the sensor surfaces (37, 67; 47, 57) operable in the outside area;

12) wherein the two inner electrodes serve to transfer an inner coupling field (50.1 to 50.4);

13) wherein the active surfaces (35, 59; 45, 55) of the first inner electrode (35, 59; 45, 55) build up the coupling field (50.1 to 50.4), and are called exciter surfaces of the first inner electrode;

14) wherein the exciter surfaces (35, 59; 45, 55) of the first inner electrode are arranged on the bracket (10) at a free gap (39) to the transfer surfaces (36, 56; 46) of the second inner electrode, which first inner electrode is connected to the electronic sensor circuit (28, 38) and relative to the transfer surfaces (36, 56; 46) of the second inner electrode at least in the rest position builds the electrical coupling field (50.1 to 50.4);

15) wherein the coupling field (50.1 to 50.4) functions in the inner area of the external door handle; and

16) in the outer area of the external door handle, the approach or contact detected by the sensor surfaces (37, 67; 47, 57) is conducted to the electronic sensor circuit (28, 38) in the bracket (10) by via the transfer surfaces (35, 56; 46) of the second inner electrode and the exciter surfaces (35, 59; 45, 55) of the first inner electrode.

Turning now to the references and particularly to Marcarini, admittedly, this reference does teach some of the feature recited in independent claim 24 now on file. Specifically features 1-11 as indicated above are shown by Marcarini. Marcarini also teach a grip 5 that contains a capacitive sensor 12, but is free of a capacitive control unit 8. The capacitive control unit 8 is

located in the vehicle door as shown in Fig. 1. The capacitive sensor 12 is formed as an electrode 13 that extends to the bearing 20 and provides a mechanical slide contact with the end 21 of an electrical conductor 19. The electrical conductor 19 provides a mechanical contact with the end piece 14 of the electrode 13. The end 21 of the electrical conductor 19 must be pressed with a large force against the end 14 of the electrode 13. The contact can be broken due to corrosion. A clear gap between the contact positions of the electrical conductor 19 and the end piece 21 of the electrode 13 in the grip can never be allowed.

Additionally, features 12-16, as indicated above, are not taught by Marcarini. In contrast to Marcarini, in the presently claimed invention there must be a free gap between the inner electrodes, i.e. 35 and 36 in Fig. 1 of the present application, so that an inner coupling field 50.1 can be attained.

The coupling field 50.1, 50.4 according to the present invention is also not taught by Van den Boom et al. As shown in Fig. 1 of Van den Boom et al., the electrode is connected by a conductor 18 with the electrical control unit 16. This is the opposite to a coupling field according to the present invention.

Thus, since neither of the references teaches a construction having a coupling field, their combination cannot provide such a teaching.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1, 6, 8, 11-17 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over a combination of the above-discussed references is overcome and should be withdrawn.

The remaining references which were cited in various combinations with Marcarini and Van den Boom et al. have also been considered. Applicant submits that none of these references add adds anything to the teachings of Marcarini and Van den Boom et al. so as to suggest the present invention as discussed above in connection with the independent claim.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

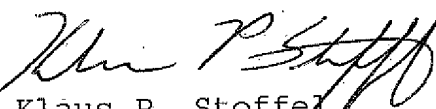
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Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:


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